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LIVESTOCK CLUB WORK HAS BEEN A VALUABLE
EXPERIENCE FOR 4-H CLUB MEMBERS

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

A radio talk by C. D. Lowe, Senior Extension Animal bandman, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., broadcast Saturday, September 7, 1935, over WMAL and 56 other stations of the National Broadcasting Company.

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On the wall of my office here in Washington hangs a framed green-and-white 4-H club emblem. Surrounding it are pictures of some of the nation's outstanding livestock specimens. That's how closely 4-H club work and improved livestock are associated in my mind.

Although improvement in agriculture is the stated main objective of 4-H club work I like to think of its aim and achievement as broader than that. Granting that 4-H club work has been a potent influence, perhaps the strongest of all, in showing the way to a more prosperous and satisfying farm life, it also provides an unsurpassed training for farm boys and girls who choose the city for their life's work. It is in this latter field perhaps that livestock club work has had as great an influence as in agriculture. Even though a boy may leave his early environment of growing crops and green pastures to seek his fortune amid the city's din and rush, the experience gained through his guardianship of man's humble four-footed friends of the barnyard stands him in good stead along life's pathway, wherever it may lead.

How often those of us who were farm-reared think back, in moments of repose, to pleasant and profitable experiences with livestock on the farm. Unfortunately many of us were denied the advantage of organized club work in our youth but the training was there just the same. "Buck" and "Berry" my boyhood yoke of oxen gave me many lessons in the value of kindness, cooperation and perseverance, that are still fresh in memory.

Baby beef club work probably has had as much influence as any other 4-H project on general farm practice. When 4-H club members began the feeding and showing of baby beefes the large majority of commercial cattle coming to market were 3- and 4-year olds -- so-called heavy cattle. The popularity of the smaller package of beef produced by club members commanded immediate attention. Adult producers began to take notice and soon saw that a new factor in beef production was in the picture; the fat calf. Many began to select and breed for the early maturity so necessary to success in baby beef production. They saw the economic advantage of the calf's greater efficiency in the use of feed, in the continuous process of pushing the calf to early market weight and as a result a great section of our beef production industry was made over. 4-H club work pioneered the movement.

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Purebred pig clubs have done much to improve the quality of swine. This is particularly true in the South and West. Practical hog raisers in many communities have found the herds of 4-H pig club members a dependable source of breeding stock. Club members have been noticeably free from fads and fancies and have produced hogs of high utility value.

4-H colt clubs have been among the leaders in the revival of interest in the farm draft horse. Club members took up the colt club project long before the rank and file of horsemen had awakened to the farm power situation.

Individual success as livestock producers has come often to former club members. Such successes have occurred in practically every county where livestock clubs have been in existence. You have just heard one of them, Russell Lehe of Indiana, on this program. Many others deserve special mention but time permits reference to but a few.

Harry Knabe of Nebraska has excelled as a breeder of purebred hogs. A carload of his Hampshires won the grand championship at the "American Royal" a few years ago.

Raymond Mobley of Illinois won the grand champion carcass award with one of his Aberdeen-Angus steers at the Chicago International Live Stock Exposition last year.

Clair Gilbert of Indiana with his Shropshire sheep has won national recognition by his winnings at the major fairs in open competition.

And Katherine Shelton of New York has made an enviable record with her fat lambs at the "International" and other livestock shows.

Many other livestock club members who have made good come to mind, but I must not forget Kenneth Litton of Virginia. When I first met Kenneth he was showing a 4-H club calf at the Virginia State Fair. Now he is one of the animal husbandry specialists in his agricultural college and a genuine leader.

But 4-H livestock club work is by no means confined to show-yard experiences. The fairs are merely the show window of the project. The day by day feeding, care and management of animals and the keeping of accurate records of the enterprise provide practical training of great value to all those who participate in it.

All in all it is not too much to say that the 4-H livestock club members of yesterday are the progressive breeders and livestock leaders of today. They have won this recognition by their industry, perseverance and vision. And it has not all been a path of roses.

Many obstacles have been encountered but in most cases overcome. All who really tried have profited in some respect from their 4-H club experience even though they have not had their names in the headlines nor won trips to national encampments. It has also been a training in true sportsmanship. Edgar A. Guest's lines are here fitting as a closing thought.

Play to win
But every inning
Keep in mind there's
More than winning.
Victory's sweet
But good or ill
An honest name
Is sweeter still.

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